

19 January 1982

Recent Attack Against a French Nuclear Reactor
Construction Site

Press reports indicate that an unknown group, claiming to be "ecologist and pacifist," last night used rockets to attack a building that is to contain France's most advanced nuclear reactor--the Super Phenix fast breeder reactor. Five rockets exploded on the site. Damage was minor, and none of the 20 people at the site were injured.

The main objective of the attackers probably was to disrupt the French nuclear power program, and presumably other European nuclear power programs, by demonstrating a willingness and a capability to damage nuclear facilities from positions outside the security perimeters. Their failure to inflict significant damage probably was due to the heavy concrete construction involved. The attackers may consider their efforts to have been successful, however, insofar as officials recognize that a similar attack on the facility after its completion would be fairly likely to force costly and annoying shutdowns for inspection or repair.

This event probably will not spur terrorist groups to employ similar means of furthering their objectives. The impact of the event on the French populace probably will not be any greater than that of other attacks on French nuclear reactor construction sites in the 1970s. Further anti-nuclear attacks on operating nuclear facilities would have more relevance for terrorist groups, who would monitor with keen interest the popular response to threats of deliberate actions creating radioactive contamination hazards.

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